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The European Archaeologist

The newsletter of EAA members for EAA members

Issue 50 – Autumn 2016

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the EAA Committee said at the EAA conference in Vilnius this year, that is ‘the power of archaeology’.

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RomanArmy.eu: A multivocal research project on the Roman army presence in NW Iberia from the margins of Academia

by Rebeca Blanco-Rotea, Department of History, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain; University of Minho, Portugal (rebeca.blanco.rotea@usc.es), José M. Costa-García, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain; VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands (josemanuel.costa@usc.es), João Fonte, Institute of Heritage Sciences (Incipit), Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Spain; University of Exeter, UK (joao.fonte@incipit.csic.com), David González Álvarez, Institute of Heritage Sciences (Incipit), Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Spain; Durham University, UK (david.gonzalez-alvarez@incipit.csic.es), Andrés Menéndez Blanco, University of Oviedo, Spain (andresmenendezblanco@gmail.com), Manuel Gago-Mariño, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain (maqago@gmail.com), Valentín Álvarez Martínez, Independent Researcher, Spain (v.alvarezmartinez33@gmail.com)

Intrahistory: the genesis of RomanArmy.eu

The following text details a research experience in Archaeology from the margins of the Academy, where it is also possible to articulate a scientific, self-managed project on the basis of a rigorous work although lacking external funding. Our intention is to disclose the Romanarmy.eu project in the context of the EAA, after our participation at the 22nd Annual Meeting which took place in Vilnius in September 2016.

Thanks to the interconnectivity of the present-day world, six archaeologists and one Heritage reporter who shared a special common interest met about one year ago. Each of us had individual research focused in NW Iberia and additionally each of us had previously worked on Conflict Archaeology, even if we had focused on diverse historical periods or followed different methodological approaches. The discussion about the Roman temporary camps which caused the meeting –either because some of us usually study this period or because our individual research had occasionally led us in that direction–gave rise to our collaborative work.

At that time, a small revolution was taking place in the study of this type of archaeological sites. On the one hand, an increasing number of Roman military settlements had been identified in NW Iberia in recent years; on the other, more and more sites were being found in the western areas of this region, outside the mountain ranges of Cantabria and Asturias or the Duero basin, where the Classical sources placed the Cantabrian Wars sites of Augustan times. New defensive enclosures began to be recognised in the western areas of Asturias and Leon, as well as in Galicia and northern Portugal. Therefore, we decided to join forces, to try to establish synergies, and to make the most of the scientific work we had done to date.

At the very beginning, we held virtual meetings, or they were organised in parallel to each of our individual projects. It could be said that our founding meeting took place on 16 November, 2015, despite having carried out previous joint actions. It was then when we solidified a roadmap that laid the foundations of our work philosophy, established a work agenda for the next year and launched the most visible part of our project: the romanarmy.eu (<http://romanarmy.eu/en>) website.

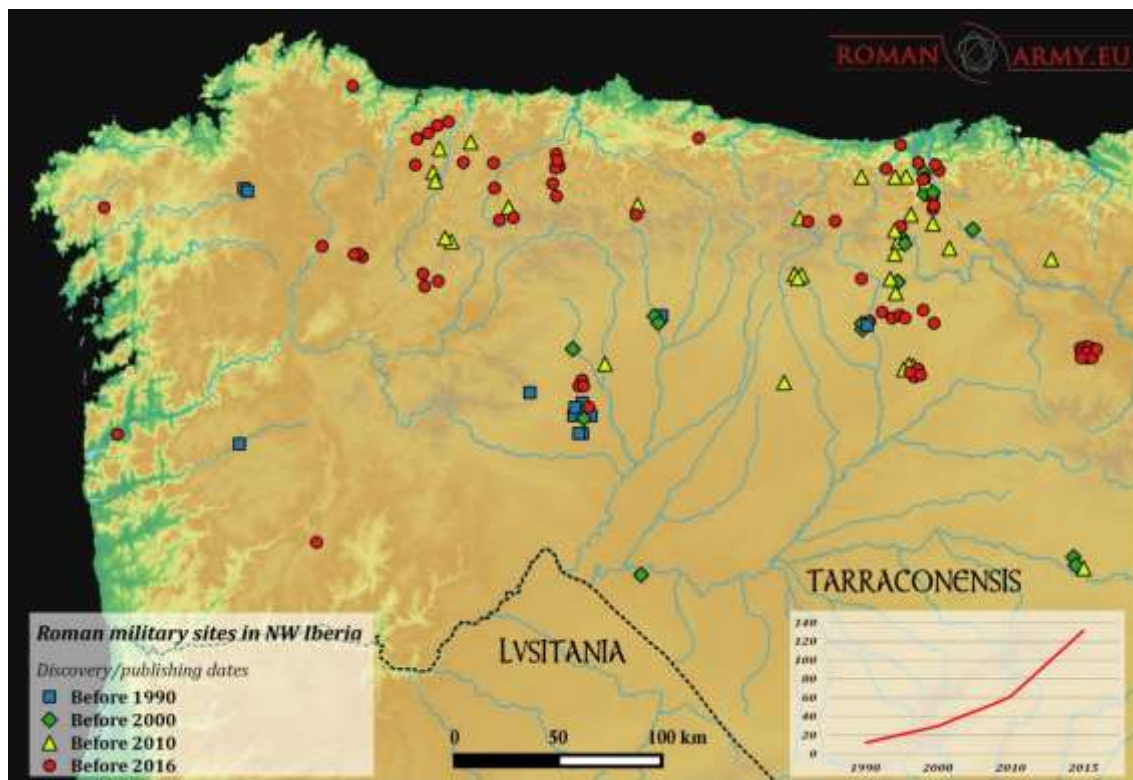


Fig. 1. Map of RM sites between 1990 and 2015

Since the socialization of our Heritage and the interaction with the community are inalienable principles for us the website had to follow them. This way, we planned a multilingual platform which gave account of our activity, project and team, as well as describe the scientific process behind the construction of knowledge, in this case regarding the presence of the Roman army in NW Iberia. Thus, one of our objectives when landing in digital media was to open our day-to-day work to the public, so we could share doubts and certainties derived from our research process with our followers. Simultaneously to the website, we also generated a brand image and launched

Romanarmy.eu on social media: since its creation in December 2015 our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/romanarmynw/>) has generated more than 840 followers (October 2016); the Twitter account (https://twitter.com/RomanArmy_eu) was founded in August 2016 and is being quickly accepted on the 140-character network.

Research Framework

Roman military Archaeology in Spain has assisted an important renovation starting from the last decade of the XX century onwards, thanks to the development of urban Archaeology and the improvement of field survey techniques, among other advances. On this methodological basis, the use of resources such as aerial and satellite photography has increasingly grown and, especially in the last decade, they have become more accessible and affordable. Since more people can openly access to them, the investigation has consequently become more democratised. Thus, the traditional academic and specialized corsets began to loosen and the general public started to participate in the progress of this research field. For instance, numerous discoveries were featured by Archaeology enthusiasts and were spread through social media. Also through these open platforms we can find discussions and debates where academics and general public get involved on the same level.

Quantitatively speaking, the results of this process are quite impressive: if only a dozen of military sites from the Roman early empire were known in the NW Iberia by 1990, we can now talk about more than one hundred (COSTA-GARCÍA *et al.* 2015, [video](#) of the presentation). A large number of these sites have been recently recognized and studied by using remote sensing techniques, that is, historical and modern aerial photography, satellite imagery, airborne LiDAR and aerial photogrammetry. The combination of all these tools with archaeological field surveying techniques, the analysis of the local oral tradition and place names, as well as the use of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) have allowed us to develop cost-effective methodologies in recent years which have proved their solvency when studying this type of archaeological features in almost any terrain type (COSTA-GARCÍA *et al.* 2016; GONZÁLEZ ÁLVAREZ 2016 *et al.*).



Fig. 2. Visit to the Roman camp of Moyapán (Ayande), organized by the local group Eixe Cultural Ayandés, guided by Andrés Menéndez Blanco.

The objectives of Romanarmy.eu

At the present time, our main goal is to consolidate this line of research, to explore its potential, to reinforce any weaknesses shown by the methodology we apply, and to better understand how the Roman military presence in NW Iberia was articulated by adopting multidisciplinary perspectives. These general aims are materialised through several specific objectives:

- to explore and develop cost-effective methodologies to analyse the archaeological sites and archaeological traces left by the advance of the Roman army in NW Iberia;
- to establish a working protocol specifically designed for the detection and processing of ephemeral archaeological information of this kind;
- to contribute to the characterisation of the Roman military landscapes in NW Iberia on the basis of the referred archaeological evidence;
- to review the historiographical discourses on the Roman conquest and to study the transcendence that this episode had in the process of building the history of the Iberian Peninsula;
- to design communication strategies in order to integrate the feedback from the general public in the construction of 'open' and 'bottom-up' knowledge;
- to analyse the interest these types of archaeological projects arouse among the general public through web platforms and social media;
- to experiment with the development of self-managed research projects and horizontal organization initiatives, looking for the democratisation of the archaeological research.

Although it is still too early to draw up the scientific and social impact of the Romanarmy.eu project, there are a few things that can already be measured. They show the interest that this research subject seems to awake among the scientific community and the general public, as well as the potential of the shared, multidimensional and interdisciplinary projects, since they multiply the results of the research.

- **Social media:** from the creation of the Facebook page in December 2015, it has reached a total of 761 "likes". Through engagement dynamics, more than 2300 users engaged the more widespread publications. The peaks of activity ("likes", comments and shared posts) often coincide with the participation of all or part of the team in an event and its public diffusion. In demographic terms, the community is made up of users of an age between 25 and 44 (60%), predominantly male.
- **Website:** since this platform was created, 19 posts have been published. They take account of different archaeological sites, conference presentations or publications related to the topic (<http://romanarmy.eu/es/category/historias/>). The site also shows some interesting statistics: more than 10,000 page views a year, 3874 unique users, with almost 70% of the audience coming from Spain and 18% from Portugal. It is also noteworthy, the coherence that exists between the social media and the website audiences. This reveals that a great connection between the two communication channels of this project and the links with a regional audience.
- **Mass Media:** between the months of September 2015 and September 2016, a total of 26 pieces of news have been published featuring some of the team members in relation to the study presence of the Roman army in NW Iberia regarding the researches carried out by Romanarmy.eu as a whole (<http://romanarmy.eu/en/medios/impresos-e-electronicos/9>). Five main stories (interviews, reports, etc...) have been produced in audio-visual media (<http://romanarmy.eu/en/medios/audiovisual/>).
- **Scientific production:** since the team project has been developed 8 papers have been published, 10 live talks (the most recent one took place at the 22nd Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, GONZÁLEZ ÁLVAREZ *et al.* 2016). given and 3 posters have been presented at international conferences and scientific meetings.

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<http://eaavilnius2016.lt/>

From our correspondents

Alpine area

Two new books on Alpine archaeology, announced by our Alpine regional correspondent, Marcel Cornelissen (marcel.cornelissen@uzh.ch)

Sophie Providoli, Patrick Elsig, Philippe Curdy, 2016, 400 Jahre im Gletschereis. Der Theodulpass bei Zermatt und sein «Söldner». Reihe des Geschichtsmuseums Wallis, Band 13

http://www.hierundjetzt.ch/de/catalogue/400-jahre-im-gletschereis_15000039/

Marion Sauter (Ed.), 2016, Surenenpass, Archäologie und Geschichte in Attinghausen. Librum, Hochwald, ISBN-Nr: 9783952454213

<http://librum-publishers.com/surenenpass/>

Obituaries

Mark Pluciennik (11.11.1953 – 7.5.2016)

reprinted with permission from <https://www2.le.ac.uk/staff/community/people/tributes/obituary-for-dr-mark-pluciennik>

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our former colleague and friend to many, Dr Mark Pluciennik, who passed away after a long illness on Saturday, 7 May.

Mark was born in Enfield in 1953. His early careers were as a youth worker and journalist in London, Cornwall, Yorkshire, South Wales, and elsewhere. He studied at the University of Sheffield where he completed his PhD on the later prehistoric landscape of South Italy and Sicily (1990-1994). Fellow postgraduate student, Dr Chris Cumberpatch remembers Mark as ‘one of the leading thinkers in the Department of Archaeology and Prehistory in the late 1980s and early 1990s ... His clarity of thought and expression enabled him not only to enter into and often lead debates but also to render complex issues accessible to those where were less familiar with the concepts involved.’ Mary Ann Owoc, who studied with Mark throughout his undergraduate and postgraduate studies remembers Mark’s combination of an ‘incredibly serious approach to archaeology, politics, and life with a lighthearted, contagious sense of humor, excellent taste, and the highest standards in literature.’